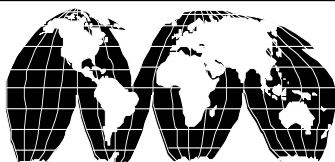


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Review of Assessment Activities



Issue 4

Spring 1996

In This Issue

We are happy to announce that with this issue, we have completed an entire year's cycle! Your continued cooperation has helped to make the newsletter a success over the past year. We look forward to another year of exciting newsletter topics.

*The focus of the fourth issue of **Review of Assessment Activities** is data collection. The organizational arrangements used to collect data are discussed. And, as always, this quarter's data collection activities are presented.*

Data Collection

We asked countries to tell us about how they collect national assessment data, including who is involved and what their roles and responsibilities are. You reported that a variety of different organizational arrangements are used for collecting data. Table 1 illustrates the organizational arrangements for data collection. In some countries, such as **France**, the Ministry of

Education conducts the data collection, while in other countries, such as **England**, a subnational education authority collects data. In yet other countries, a research institute conducts the data collection, such as in **Finland** and **Portugal**. And in **Spain** and the **United States**, it is a private contractor that carries out the data collection for the Ministry of Education.

Your responses reflected an interesting and relevant debate in the assessment community — whether a student's own teacher can be used to administer the test. On one hand, it is thought that the presence of a student's teacher could falsely imply that the test has high stakes. For example, **Spain** reported that they do not use school personnel to administer the test. Instead, they rely upon experienced psychologists and education experts. Also, the **United States** employs a private contractor to collect national-level data for its National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

On the other hand, it is thought that the use of a student's own teacher will not influence the results or may even help the students to perform their best. In line with this approach, several of you reported that school personnel are used as test administrators. You also emphasized the use of training to ensure that the test is given in a standardized manner. **Portugal** reported that school personnel are trained by the Institute of Educational Innovation (IIE) to collect data. **France** and **the United States** (in its state-level NAEP)

TABLE 1: ORGANIZATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR DATA COLLECTION

Country	Data Collection Arrangements
England	External Monitoring Agencies, Local Education Authorities, External Marking Agencies, Grant Maintained Schools, and Independent Schools provide data to the Department for Education and Employment (DFEE).
Finland	The Institute for Educational Research (IER), under the Ministry of Education and National Board of Education Authority, collect data from schools.
France	The Assessment and Forecasting Department (DEP) is responsible for the data collection, and tests are administered and coded by instructors.
Portugal	The Institute of Educational Innovation (IIE) works with schools and regional authorities to collect data.
Spain	The National Institute for Quality and Evaluation (INCE) contracts with a private firm, which collects the data from schools.
Turkey	The Ministry of National Education, State Planning Organization, and State Institute of Statistics collect the data from schools.
United States	For national-level National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the Department of Education contracts with a private firm, which collects the data from schools. For state-level NAEP, school personnel administer the assessment.

also use school personnel to administer the test. These three countries noted that the quality of the data collection is ensured by training the school personnel and monitoring the test administration.

Each country's data collection arrangements are summarized as follows:

- In **England**, the External Monitoring Agencies and Local Education Authorities (LEAs) collect data under the authority of the Department for Education and Employment (DFEE). Also, data is received from External Marking Agencies, Grant Maintained Schools, and Independent Schools. The Grant Maintained Schools and Independent Schools have the option of submitting their data through an accredited agency. The data from the LEAs is summarized in order to establish the overall results for each authority. The DFEE then compiles and analyzes the data to produce national-level results;
- In **Finland**, the Ministry of Education and National Board of Education have given the Institute for Educational Research (IER) the authority to collect data from schools;
- In **France**, the Assessment and Forecasting Division (DEP) is responsible for all data collection, analysis, and interpretation of assessment results. Instructors are responsible for collecting data in their respective classes, and the administration of the assessment is subject to strict procedures in order to ensure standard administration;
- **Portugal's** IIE is responsible for developing and administering the national assessment. It coordinates data collection procedures with schools and regional education authorities. Additionally, the IIE trains school personnel and monitors the quality of the data collection. Schools are then responsible for collecting data from their students, teachers, and principals;

- In **Spain**, tests are prepared by the National Institute for Quality and Education (INCE), including designing the data collection plan, sampling procedures, and data coding procedures. INCE then provides specific instructions to an external firm who administers the tests, including making contact with the schools and sending experts to the schools to administer the test. Once data are collected, the results are sent to another firm to be coded (according to INCE's instructions) and entered into a database. After the data are collected and coded, the contractor sends them to INCE for analysis and reporting;
- **Turkey's** Ministry of National Education, State Planning Organization, and State Institute of Statistics collect data from schools. Analyses and evaluations are performed by the Ministry of National Education and State Institute of Statistics; and
- In **the United States**, for its national-level NAEP, a private contractor is responsible for collecting data from a national sample and monitoring the data collection procedures. In its state-level NAEP, however, school personnel administer the test.

Network A Meeting Update

The Spring 1996 Network A meeting was held in Las Palmas, Spain from April 16 to 20. We thank our Spanish hosts for holding a productive meeting in such a beautiful location!

The activities began with meetings for the Ad Hoc Working Groups on Competency Levels and Implementation. These two Working Groups were formed at the Fall 1995 meeting in Dublin. The Competency Levels Working

Group was charged with (a) reviewing the state of the art in developing and using competency levels, (b) creating a plan for developing competency levels as described in the data strategy, and (c) putting into place a structure for developing competency levels. The Implementation Working Group was charged with developing an implementation plan that builds on the data strategy.

At the Competency Levels meeting, it was decided that a paper by Geoff Masters of the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) would be commissioned. This paper will be used to help the Network set its course regarding competency levels.

Next, the Implementation Working Group reviewed a draft implementation plan that had been prepared based on its meeting in February. To guide the implementation efforts, they will be commissioning a paper on sampling.

Both Working Groups will meet again in conjunction with the Fall 1996 Network A meeting.

The plenary session was equally productive. The draft *Education at a Glance* indicators were reviewed, and the Network members made many useful suggestions for the next revision. Network members also provided updates on their estimates of national costs of implementing the data strategy. Next, Marit Granheim reported on the status of the GOALS report, which should be ready for Network review by the Fall of 1996. Then, as part of his report on the cross-curricular competencies (CCC) subgroup, Jules Peschar distributed the final version of the CCC Report. The report will be published as a volume in an INES series of Network developmental activities. Jules also reviewed the CCC's plans for the next year, which include, in late 1996, a conference for policy makers and a workshop, in early 1997, examining how the CCC measurement

concepts relate to the original conceptualizations.

Upcoming Changes to the Newsletter

In an effort to continually improve the newsletter, we would like to announce three upcoming changes.

First, we will now be publishing the newsletter two times per year – once in the Spring and once in the Fall. This will allow us to continue to provide valuable information to our readers while reducing the number of times that you must provide us with information. The next issue will be published in the Fall of 1996.

Second, in addition to continuing to focus on a different assessment topic each issue, we would like to highlight a different participating country's assessment system in each issue. This will allow us to continue to cover a broad spectrum of approaches across countries, while also taking a more in-depth look at a country's assessment system.

Third, you will soon be able to read the newsletter on the World-Wide Web, which will allow instant access to all newsletters by anyone with Internet capability. Of course, we will still continue to provide you with "hard copies" of the newsletter. We will keep you informed of the status of the effort.

Assessment Activities This Quarter

Many important assessment activities are being carried out this Spring. These activities are described below and listed in Table 2.

The following test construction, development, and revision activities are taking place:

- **France** is evaluating its National Evaluations Protocols which are planned for September 1996 for grades 2, 5, and 7 (CE2; grade 6, 1st cycle; and grade 4, 2nd cycle, respectively); France also is developing criteria and variables for population descriptions and scales as well as preparing and evaluating protocols for the first year of compulsory schooling; and
- **Portugal's** IIE is finalizing tests.

Coordination, preparation, and consensus building are being conducted as follows:

- **Portugal** is organizing school testing procedures and training school personnel to administer its assessment; and
- **The United States** is building consensus and writing test specifications for its civics test.

Data collection is underway in the following countries:

- **Turkey** is collecting and evaluating educational statistics from the 1995-96 school year and reviewing other relevant statistical information; and
- **The United States** is collecting data in mathematics and science for grades 4, 8, and 12.

With respect to scoring and analyzing activities, **France** is analyzing the results from its grade 2 (CE2) evaluation that was held in 1995 and is performing basic calculations on its middle school evaluation that was conducted in June of 1995.

The following reporting activities are being carried out:

- In January 1996, **England's** DFEE published the national results of its 1995 curriculum assessments of 7-, 11-, and 14-

year-olds. It also issued a consultation document on proposed changes for assessments in 1997 and beyond. The DFEE is currently preparing to publish tables of school-level results for its 1996 assessment of 11-year-olds;

- **France** is publishing a report detailing the results of its National Evaluation of grade 2 (CE2), which was conducted in September 1995. Another report comparing student knowledge of French and mathematics from the years 1920-1995 also is being published;
- **Spain's** final report of its Primary Education Study has been written and was sent to policy makers in March; and
- The **United States** is reporting the results of its 1994 assessments in reading, history, and geography assessments.

TABLE 2: ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES THIS QUARTER	
Assessment Activities	Countries
Test construction, development, and revision	France and Portugal
Coordination, preparation, and consensus building	Portugal and the United States
Data collection	Turkey and the United States
Scoring and analyzing	France
Reporting results	England, France, Spain, and the United States

Reports

If you would like any of your country's reports to be made available to other Network A members, please let us know and we will highlight your report in a future issue. With your cooperation, reports and information

could then be distributed through each country's contact person.

Anecdotes

At the recent Network A meeting in Spain, some of the attendees decided they would venture out on their own to explore the interior of Gran Canaria. They agreed to share two cars, which were delivered to the hotel at 11:30 Friday morning, after the meeting adjourned. They divided up into two groups and proceeded, we think, to their respective cars.

Meanwhile, Eugene Owen and Jay Moskowitz were waiting in the hotel lobby for a taxi to the airport. They report that about 15 minutes after the two groups departed from the hotel, Gerbo Korevaar returned to the lobby, presumably sent in by the rest of his group to try to locate the second group. He asked Eugene and Jay if the second group had returned to the hotel. They replied that they had seen no sign of the other group. Again, after another 15 minutes, Gerbo returned a second time, still looking for signs of the second group.

When asked to shed some light on this incident, Gerbo Korevaar reported that after waiting for a few minutes, the first car started to look for the second car at the same time that the second car was driving around looking for the first car. Neither car could find the other car, so they proceeded separately on the trip to the interior and each had a great time exploring the mountains. They did not meet up with each other until very late that evening. The conclusion is that both cars failed the CCC "plan a trip" task!

This newsletter is prepared by Eugene Owen, Network A Chair, and Jay Moskowitz, Scott Brancolini, Shelley Kirkpatrick, Ray Varisco, and Diedra White of the American Institutes for Research's Pelavin Research Center with contributions from Network A members.

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